

REMARKS

Claims 26-32, 37-43, and 46 are now pending in the application. Claims 35, 36, and 45 have been cancelled. Claim 46 has been added as new. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 26-32, 35-43 and 45 stand objected to for certain informalities. Claims 26 and 37 have been amended according to the Examiner's suggestions. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of these objections.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 26, 30, 35, 37 and 42 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Schnizler et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,697,279, hereinafter "Schnizler"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 32 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Schnizler. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 31 and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schnizler. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 27, 28, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schnizler in view of Tseng (U.S. Pat. No. 5,664,792, hereinafter "Tseng"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 38 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Schnizler in view of Kuhlmann et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,528,753, hereinafter "Kuhlmann"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Holzer, Jr. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,103,565 hereinafter Holzer). Claims 18 and 22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Langhoff (U.S. Pat. No. 5,306,025 hereinafter Langhoff). Claims 18 and 22 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Wright (U.S. Pat. No. 5,433,457 hereinafter Wright). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicants note that claims 26 and 37 have been amended to include matter considered allowable by the Examiner, as discussed below, rendering the aforementioned rejections moot.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claims 29, 36, 41 and 45 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 26 to include the limitations of the claim 36 and any intervening claims and have amended claim 37 to include the limitations of the claim 45. Therefore, claims 26 and 37 should now be in condition for allowance. Claims 27-32 depend from claim 26 and claims 38-43 depend from claim 37, and should therefore be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above. In addition, new claim 46 has been added. Claim 46 is equivalent to allowed claim 29, rewritten in independent form.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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